

TOLKIEN *Gleanings*

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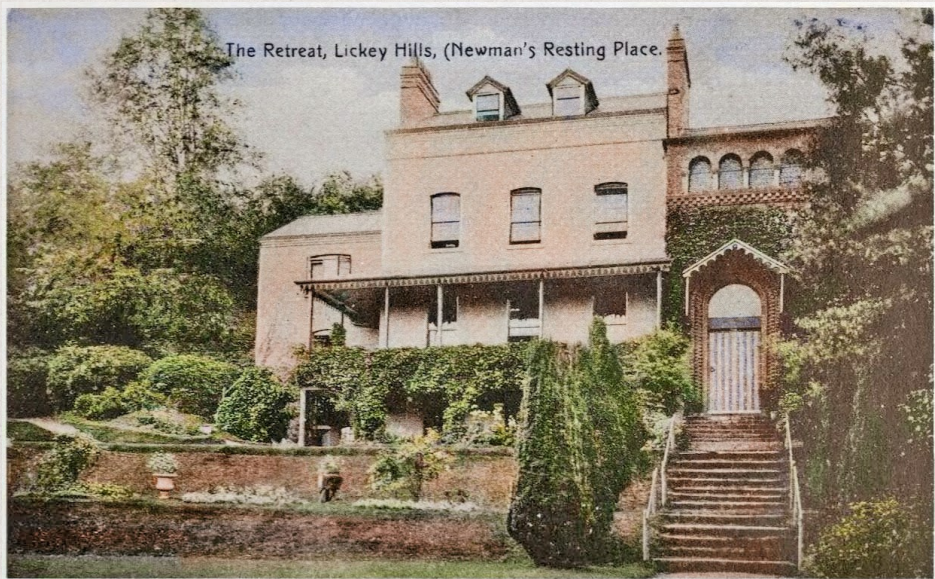
No. 4



Discerning News on Tolkien Scholarship from
THE HEART OF ENGLAND
Supplemented by occasional travels in Middle-earth

Also in this issue: articles, a book review, and notes on The Lord of the Rings.

COVER PICTURES



Front cover: Detail of a doorway of the chapel at the Birmingham Oratory's 'Retreat' house at Rednal, at the north end of the Lickey Hills near Birmingham. The postcard is perhaps circa 1900s, when Tolkien was there.

Back Cover: Carefully cleaned and colourised by myself, a studio portrait commissioned by Tolkien's students 1925/6 on his leaving Leeds. Original posted at WikiMedia in black and white and under 'Public Domain'.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the fourth PDF ‘zine issue of *Tolkien Gleanings*. I once again offer my reader a unified collection of my recent ‘Tolkien Gleanings’, these being blog posts which track useful items and events of interest to myself — and perhaps also to fellow Tolkien scholars, academics, collectors and even some visual artists.

Also in this issue, and following from last issue, more on the young Tolkien’s city of Birmingham and its environs. In this issue I’m pleased to have dug up a vital 1920 map and several fine pictures which serve to illuminate the places known in Tolkien in a particularly vital summer and autumn. He later also knew the Lickeys as a courting place... “Near the end of autumn term 1909 Ronald and Edith ride their bicycles to the Lickey Hills on an afternoon excursion.” (*Chronology*). Tolkien returned there at other times in his boyhood, on excursions or via visits to the Birmingham Oratory’s ‘Retreat’ house with Father Francis. He often stayed or visited with his Incedon relatives at nearby Barnt Green, a village just beyond the southern foot of the Lickeys, and... “in July 1913, he made several paintings and drawings, including King’s Norton from Bilberry Hill [a key hill on the Lickeys, opposite Rednal Hill]” (*Reader’s Guide*). The Lickeys were thus a key place in his youth, and such landscapes sink very deep.

Readers of the free PDF ‘zine version of my *Gleanings* can also enjoy several short essays, some word notes, and a book review. As always I welcome guest contributions for future issues, especially reviews of lesser known non-fiction books relating to Tolkien and his works. The best way to contact me is to simply drop a comment on my *Spyders of Burslem* blog. A Patreon link can also be found there.

— David Haden, Stoke-on-Trent, England. 19th May 2023.

RADAGAST

WHATEVER BECAME OF HIM?

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Radagast is first encountered by Gandalf on the Greenway, “not far from Bree” and south of that village. Radagast has not been in Bree, or he would know where the Shire is. He does not know, and has come up the Greenway without meeting any who know. Nor does Gandalf have any time to tell him that Bree has a good inn, and that rest and good food are available nearby.

After conveying his message about the Black Riders in good faith, Radagast immediately rides off south. He must now assume — since Gandalf has told him he is “near the borders of the Shire now” — that the Shire the Riders seek is only a little north along the Greenway. He’s thus anxious to be far away from the place the dreaded Riders are headed for. But why go so swiftly? He thinks they are not near the Shire *yet*. But he fears they are fast approaching...

“Even if you set out from this spot, you will hardly reach him [Saruman at Isengard] before the Nine discover the land that they seek.”

This statement implies Radagast thinks the Riders may be only two weeks away, already somewhere in Rohan or perhaps even as far west as Isengard. Two weeks is about the same time it would take him to return to Isengard. Actually Gandalf takes some 11 days to reach Isengard, once he sets out — he rides fast but he goes to Bree first to sleep and write his letter.

Radagast’s haste is then due to his thinking ahead. He has a long ride back, and the sooner and faster he goes, the less likely he is to encounter the dreaded Black Riders racing up toward the Shire. Since he evidently fears they are already in Rohan, perhaps even near Isengard. Also he now knows where the Shire is, so he dare not be captured. He may be a “master of shapes and hues”, but that may not fool Riders endowed with many extra senses. We also have to assume he knows that he is no match for even a few of them, and that he fears for his life.

Actually he has likely been deceived by Saruman on the location of the Black Riders, as explained at the end of this essay.



Nevertheless he heads south fast, having delivered Saruman's message and played his part. The 'way he came' will be the fastest and safest way back. Safe because he now knows the route and also knows there are very few other travellers. Of course the route means that he must cross the river at the flooded ruins of Tharbad, known to be a very perilous crossing — since Boromir barely made it and lost his horse in the wide and treacherous waters. Radagast *could* have perished there, but most likely not. He had made it across once, so could get back again.

Having thus crossed at Tharbad, he enters Dunland on perhaps 8th July. Among the people there he replenishes his supplies and rests his horse. Questioning the Dunlanders, he hears no hint of Black Riders, and is somewhat reassured about his safety. Note here that Saruman has not yet stirred up "the herd-folk of Dunland" into fury against Rohan, although there is likely to be some animosity against *any* horse-riding stranger.

He then has a choice. Does he loop south-west to return to Saruman, or loop north-west to seek the road to the Redhorn Gate and from there go down again toward the lands he knows so well — those on the south west edges of Mirkwood?

Of course to go to Saruman in July would be dangerous. If he is captured by the Riders then — since he knows more or less where the Shire is and how to reach it — he might be made to reveal this fact. He does not know what the Riders want, but Gandalf's reactions showed it must be *very* important. And besides, Gandalf has given him a key task, which rather precludes returning to Isengard. To find...

"the beasts and birds that are your friends. Tell them to bring news of anything that bears on this matter to Saruman and Gandalf. Let messages be sent to Orthanc."

Gandalf appears to assume that Radagast himself will *not* be at Orthanc. His new task is to be out 'in the field', effectively acting as a field intelligence and signals officer, liaising with 'irregular scouts' in their own 'lingo' and collating and passing on news. This is partly a role that Tolkien himself was very familiar with, as a Signals Officer, and he knew its vital importance in planning and winning battles.

To accomplish this new task in the best way he will need to contact the eagles of the Misty Mountains — these being the best and most trustworthy scouts and long-distance fliers. It is really only they who have the range and power for real news-gathering and conveying.

Also, note that the haughty eagles will likely not take the commands of other lesser birds, even if Radagast could contact them safely in that very roundabout and long-distance way. Recall the fears of Gandalf and Aragorn — albeit many months later — that many birds of Middle-earth are untrustworthy and serving as spies for the Enemy.

He can also be sure that Lorien's scouts will at least allow him passage on his journey up "the skirts of the mountains" toward the eagles of the Misty Mountains. But where, exactly, *are* the eagles? We know from *The Hobbit* that the eagles hunt from "inaccessible" mountain peaks quite some way north of Lorien. Seemingly on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains, north of the Gladden Fields and somewhat adjacent to the Carrock. They are big birds at the apex of the food chain and are thus relatively few and far between, and they prefer to cluster in open cultivated lands where there are sheep herders — so that they can grab the occasional sheep (see *The Hobbit* for the meaty details).

Thus from Dunland he rides on up the western side of the Misty Mountains, seeking the high ice free pass of the Redhorn Gate in high summer, and then the path and stairs that leads down to

Lorien and on toward Mirkwood. Gandalf himself partly confirms this when he vaguely tells the Council of Elrond that Radagast "rode away towards Mirkwood". "Towards", not *into*. As Legolas reveals at the Council of Elrond... "Mirkwood is again an evil place, save where our realm is maintained [in the north]". The evil must have been growing for over sixty years (after 1352), and it is likely the reason why Radagast left his "old home" at Rhosgobel in 1418 to seek the advice and shelter of Saruman.

But unbeknown to Radagast, in seeking the eagles he is headed toward the Black Riders! For they have passed over to The Field of Celebrant and have there met up with other Nazgul coming out from Dol Guldur in southern Mirkwood.

From Celebrant they go north, presumably skirting Lorien on the western side and above the sources of the Nimrodel and Silverlode. The Nine are of course averse to crossing "Elvish" rivers if there are no bridges, but this route would let them skirt around the two sources. The horde of orcs that go to occupy or reinforce Moria later take this route, described as "trackless" by Aragorn to Boromir, but also described as the passable "skirts of the mountains" by scouts of Lorien. Possibly there was an old dwarf road to Moria, made long ago.

Thus the Nine would come in sight of the stairs and check the gate of Moria, but go on to seek the halfling-like settlements further north — the ones that Gollum had hinted at to Sauron. Settlements that *might* just be the Shire. The Riders may thus at this time — perhaps a month since Radagast left Gandalf — be close to Radagast himself who is seeking the eagles in much the same area.

The Riders appear to have then discovered the Gladden Fields. In one later text from Tolkien (*Unfinished Tales*), they find there only a few scattered settlements, home to the simple rustic descendants of Gollum's long-ago people. But the Nazgul soon learn that it is not the Shire, and that these simple folk know nothing of any 'Shire'.

As Radagast moves north he would have been dismayed to have heard — from the scouts of Lorien, from Grimbeorn's folk, or simply from birds and beasts — rumour of the passing of the Nine up to the Gladden Fields. Radagast would feel his favoured stamping ground between Mirkwood and the Misty Mountains to be doubly troubled, if it had not already been so by new activity at Dol Guldur. Not only is Mirkwood's southern interior now an "evil place", but Riders are now freely passing to and fro to its west.

Yet Mirkwood is not his immediate concern. He must instead go to the Mountains, to safely convey his requests for aid to the great eagles there. This places him in the Mountains in August. Or perhaps with Beorn's son and standing on Beorn's Carrock — recall that Beorn had known and thought well of Radagast as a "worthy wizard". Once in or near the Mountains he would tell the eagles the news from himself and perhaps from the Elves, then gather more from the eagles, and ask them to "send out messages" to the most and trustworthy friendly birds, while also scouting further afield for orc bands and wolves. The news gathering might then take two or three weeks or more. Gandalf clearly states to the Council of Elrond that all this was indeed done...

"And the Eagles of the Mountains went far and wide, and they saw many things: the gathering of wolves and the mustering of Orcs; and the Nine Riders going hither and thither in the lands; and they heard news of the escape of Gollum. And they sent a messenger to bring these tidings to me."

"They sent", but who asked? My suggestion is that Radagast must ask Gwaihir to fly all the way down the mountains to Isengard. Obtaining Gwaihir's agreement for the long

and arduous journey may be easier said than done — by this time the new that Riders are likely headed north is going stale and will prove to be dead wrong. Orc movements might mean nothing, mere feints. The escape of the wretched Gollum may mean little, so far as Radagast and the eagles know. And yet, then why was his escape seemingly so vital to the Enemy? Such are the matters that the eagles and Radagast might have debated.

What then is the timing of the sending of the news, such as it is? Gandalf is rescued on the 18th September. Gwaihir has by then probably been on the wing for some three days, passing down the long chain of the Misty Mountains, then resting and feeding before he comes to Isengard at night and in secret. Such birds would usually ride and glide on thermals and cold night-flying is tiring work.

Indeed, the news of the Nine is then out of date. For they have suddenly turn back south at Sauron's mental command. Thus they never venture north to discover Beorn's son Grimbeorn or the Great East Road — that would take them straight to the Shire. Sauron instead orders them to swiftly double-back down to the Wold of Rohan, and from there to work around Fangorn Forest.

Their new aim now is to swiftly reach Isengard and question Saruman. For Saruman knows about the Shire as the "lurking place" of Gandalf, had maps of it, and had even once visited it himself (*Unfinished Tales*) to discover more about pipe-weed.

Having now fulfilled his two promises — to find Gandalf and to arrange for useful news of the Nine to be carried by bird to Isengard — Radagast is free to go where he will. In a week or two more — say the end of September — he must be fairly sure, if he again moves down toward the safety of Lorien and contacts their scouts, that the Nine are likely gone from the land and from Rohan also — and are probably on the very route through Dunland that he took to find Gandalf and 'Shire'.

All this should theoretically put him, at least for a time, in the safest place possible in that region, deep in the woods of Lorien and safe with Galadriel. After all, it was she who had called him and the other wizards of the Order to Middle-earth in the first place. Yet the Council of Elrond appear to know nothing more of him than what Gandalf tells them. After that Council, scouts are sent out. But they fail to find Radagast either in or on the edge of Mirkwood...

“some of these [scouts] had crossed the Mountains and entered Mirkwood, while others had climbed the pass at the source of the Gladden River, and had come down into Wilderland and over the Gladden Fields and so at length had reached the old home of Radagast at Rhosgobel. Radagast was not there...”

Elladan and Elrohir also hear nothing of him on the scouting journey made at the same time...

“The sons of Elrond, Elladan and Elrohir, were the last to return; they had made a great journey, passing down the Silverlode into a strange country [Lorien], but of their errand they would not speak to any save to Elrond.”

The Fellowship also hears nothing of him when they are later in Lorien. We must then assume that he was not even briefly inside Lorien, due to his going around via “the skirts of the mountains” in his haste to reach the eagles. Later, weary, he wends toward Mirkwood just as Gandalf later tells us.

So it appears he heads in the general direction of his own home, wistfully enjoying the fruits and nuts of early Autumn on the way. That scouts from Rivendell later search his “old” home at Rhosgobel implies that Gandalf and Elrond

think he might *perhaps* be found there. That scouts go all that way to find him also implies he could be of substantial use to them, or that his birds and beasts may have gathered *further* news of value, and he needs to be told to send this to Rivendell. But he is not there.

He must at least know not to send more news to Isengard, since he heard the horrible news that came *back* to him via Gwaihir or the other birds — that Isengard has become a pit of ravening wolves and orcs, and that Saruman is a traitor. He also knows far more than before about the dangers of the perilous and re-occupied Dol Guldur on the south-west tip of his very own Mirkwood.

Many fans have casually assumed that Radagast returns to Isengard and is imprisoned. True, Saruman *may* have extracted some form of ‘hue power’ from him. This is implied when we compare two statements: 1) Radagast is said by Gandalf to be a master of “changes of hue”, and 2) Saruman later appears twice... “swathed in a great cloak, the colour of which was not easy to tell, for it changed if they moved their eyes or if he stirred”. If the statements are indeed connected, then it is likely Saruman had earlier learned some of this lesser ‘wizardry of hues’

from Radagast, and made a cloak with it. But this does not mean Radagast has returned to Isengard, to be imprisoned by Saruman. Recall also that the tower is later carefully searched. He is not found there, not any remains or signs of him.

There are far more plausible possibilities for his final locations.

He might perhaps have stayed with Beorn's son through the winter and into the spring, co-ordinating his birds and the gathering of further vital reconnaissance news. Yet where could he send it? Gandalf and Rivendell appear to gain no further intelligence via eagles or birds, and Radagast presumably has no knowledge about the location of either. The scouts of Lorien would not risk revealing anything of Rivendell to one they suspected might be being hunted by the nearby Nazgul. And he was not at a previous major Council meeting in Rivendell, since the Shire was discussed there and he then would know of both it and Rivendell.

Possibly it is Galadriel who regularly gets such news from him? Recall that it is apparently she who sends Gwaihir to rescue Gandalf on the pinnacle after his dreadful battle with and defeat of the Balrog. Perhaps she calls on Gwaihir's services via Radagast?

What then? Some commentators assume he took a simple life in some hidden woodland dell. After all, he was "never a great traveller" as Gandalf said. But where would he feel safe, on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains, to make a new home somewhat within reach of his Mirkwood? In the musty old Fangorn, which lacks beasts and birds? Unlikely. With Beorn's son and his bees? Perhaps. In Lorien? No, or he would have been known to scouts and the Fellowship as they passed through. Also, Lorien appears to lack beasts and birds. Out on the Wold of Rohan with its all-year herd-folk tending their horses? Unlikely, with no woods and few beasts other than the horse herds. Further south, only the Brown Lands, the bleak Eryn Mui and the vast arc of reeking marshes.

The still-fair Gladden Fields seems the most likely spot, living near and helping the villages of Smeagol's simple folk (if any remain there). The waterlands and meadows and small woods would suit him well. At least until a return to Mirkwood, some years after the War.

But certainly the lack of any further mention of him — he does not return over the sea, but nor is he condemned as a deserter — implies his fate was simply unknown to the chroniclers and the minstrels.

Given all this, can we say more about his role in the Order and as one of the Istari? Well, one can observe that he does *exactly* what's needed of an intelligence and signals officer, ahead of a great war. He keeps out of sight as a 'sleeper' agent for two thousand years, displaying his simplicity and apparent harmlessness. But he also builds his intelligence network and deep native-language skills (his "birds and beasts"), while working out in fine detail who among these can be trusted and who can't.

He probably also develops what appear to be his special camouflage and disguise skills. Recall he is the "master of hues and changes of shape", which may imply a Saruman-like 'glamour' power of changing his appearance in the eyes of others, rather than being a Beorn-like skin-changer.

He makes vital but tenuous contacts with powerful locals such as Beorn. As Beorn says... "I used to see him now and again ... a worthy wizard". This implies he used some of his powers to aid Beorn. Meanwhile he keeps away from Gandalf, so as not to draw unwanted attention. Yet he does position himself in a forward outpost, near enough to Dol Guldur to keep a weather-eye on it and the evil Necromancer who is "taking shape" there.

It is even possible that Radagast gathered intelligence useful to the first and earlier attack on Dol Guldur.

Much later Gandalf commands him — rather hastily, admittedly — to activate his 'spy' network for the gathering and sending of vital intelligence prior to the War of the Ring. The gone-native 'sleeper' awakes, perhaps somewhat reluctantly, and we know he then gather news and sends the required messages to Gandalf. Perhaps also to Galadriel, later on. He may even help to her liase with the eagles.

This sort of advance and long-range intelligence — gained well before the 'fog of war' descends and confusion and haste combine in chaos — can be vital for ultimate victory. My feeling is that some form of intelligence gathering was always his intended role — do not both his apparently 'simplicity' and his skills of deception show it?

Possibly he then plays a similar role in advance of the second assault on Dol Guldur, but if so then that would be known to Gandalf. That he is not mentioned suggests he did not take part. By that time there was presumably little need for intelligence, and the power of the Ents and Galadriel was all that was needed for victory.

Two final problems occur, relating to Radagast's initial appearance in *The Lord of the Rings*:

1) On *Lethe* (31st June) he tells Gandalf that the Nine have crossed the river and "taken the guise of riders in black". How does he know this? Since the majority of them are not again horsed and garbed until some weeks later, on 17th July. One answer is that he knows this *not* via his own intelligence gathering networks, but rather via Saruman.

But where does Saruman get his information? The most obvious choice is that that Saruman has seen in the Palantir of Orthanc something that Sauron has 'let' him see. Most likely the sight was of a combination of the Riders leaving Minas Morgul *as riders*, combined with visions of the great shadow of fear which then defeats Gondor's warriors at Osgiliath. Saruman only glimpses the vital 'invisible' crossing of the river by the lesser Nazgul, but he knows they have crossed. He assumes that, once safely across the river, they will swiftly assume the same form they had taken between Minas Morgul and Osgiliath. Hence, they will again be "riders in black".

It is also possible that Radagast has his own knowledge of the two Nazgul who have occupied Dol Guldur, who he may have heard now take the form of "riders in black".

2) A trickier problem follows from this. It *seems* that Saruman has heard from his spies in Rohan that the Nine seek the Shire, and he knows Gandalf is in or near the Shire. He *appears* to have surmised that the Nine will then ride swiftly through Rohan, find there that the land of the halflings is "far away, over many hills and rivers", and thus pass on toward Isengard. He conveys this to Radagast, but does not reveal how he has *obtained* the knowledge, or that he has himself once visited The Shire and knows well enough where it is. Again, the problem in all this is his apparent fore-knowledge, since the Nine will not be cloaked and horsed until 17th July. That is *after* Radagast meets Gandalf and warns him.

We must then assume that Saruman has deceived Radagast on this point. He knows that he *will* soon hear from his spies that "Riders in black" are asking "for news of a land called Shire". Since Sauron has told him or shown him so via the Palantir. This deception explains why Radagast helps in having birds serve as spies for Saruman, and also why Radagast is 'in advance' in his estimation of the location and nearness of the Riders, when he at last meets up with Gandalf on a grassy bank of the Greenway near Bree. This deception also usefully causes Gandalf to hasten to Isengard.



Known and likely timeline:

Late spring?: The invisible Nazgul and other evil things are being called to Dol Guldur and Mordor, and their passage causes some men to flee west bearing dire rumours. The vicinity of Dol Guldur is now far too dangerous. Radagast travels to Saruman.

Early June?: Radagast stays at Isengard. He sees there no signs that Saruman is a traitor.

12th June?: Saruman sends Radagast to find Gandalf by ‘midsummer’ (*Lithe*, 31st June). Saruman knows where the Shire is, but cannot say so to Radagast. Nevertheless his hints are enough. The journey should take about two weeks, but Radagast tells Gandalf he has “wasted time in looking for you”, probably on either side of Tharbad.

June?: Lesser Nazgul join the army forming at Minas Morgul, possibly now in the guise of Riders in black. Army marches to Osgiliath.

20th June: Six Nazgul divest their shapes and in the chaos of battle secretly cross the bridge at Osgiliath, invisible and shapeless.

“At the end of June”: Gandalf encounters Radagast near Bree. Radagast fears (wrongly) that the Black Riders are even now near Isengard and seeking the ‘Shire’. Yet the crossing at Osgiliath only happened some ten days earlier and they are not yet “Riders in black”— but possibly the Palantir has shown Saruman the guise the Nazgul *will* take.

Last days of June: Radagast is riding south at speed. He fears meeting the massed and fast Riders, moving north on the same road.

1st July: Nazgul become coherent enough to begin searching for the Shire, and move north from Anduin toward the Wold of Rohan.

1st July: Gandalf leaves Bree, for Isengard,

Early July?: Radagast is in Dunland. Then going north up the western flanks of the Misty Mountains, toward the Redhorn Gate.

11th July: Gandalf trapped in Orthanc.

17th July: On the Andiun above Sarn Gebir, the Nazgul who crossed at Osgiliath are now horsed and clothed again as ‘Black Riders’.

22nd July: The Nine are now fully assembled, after meeting the two Nazgul of Dol Guldur on the Field of Celebrant.

Start of August?: Radagast crosses the Mountains. He goes up the eastern side of these, aiming to reach the eyries and sheep-taking grounds of the eagles. He quietly tries to contact the eagles via the lesser birds.

Early August: The Nine pass by Lorien on the west, up the trackless skirts of the mountains and above the rivers. Radagast is aghast to learn that these Riders are near, and perhaps behind him in seeming pursuit.

Mid August?: Radagast organises the eagles and other birds to track the Riders, and to fly to the far Wood Elves to gather other news.

Late August: The Riders at last find the Gladden Fields and search thoroughly, aware from Gollum or other sources of hobbit-like people there. But they find nothing of use.

Mid September: Sauron vehemently commands all his Nazgul to leave their fruitless search. They are to ride south with great haste, to question Saruman at Isengard.

15th September: Gwaihir departs for Isengard with Radagast’s digest of news.

18th September: Gwaihir the eagle comes to Gandalf, atop the tower of Orthanc.

c. 19th September: Near Isengard, the Riders at last learn the location of the Shire. They race toward it at incredible speed.

23rd September: Gwaihir the eagle likely returns from Rohan. Radagast thus hears the dreadful news about Isengard and Saruman.

October: Radagast’s further location is unknown, but he is likely moving “towards” Mirkwood — as Gandalf later vaguely states to the Council of Elrond.

He likely then lives on in Mirkwood, helping over hundreds of years to cleanse it. But haunted always by the thought that he might have done more to help in the War of the Ring.

Yet perhaps the healing of Middle-earth was always part of his intended role, when the Three Rings and the Elves had departed? And that may be an encouraging thought.



TOLKIEN GLEANINGS

Selected items of possible interest to Tolkien scholars, collectors, and devotees, as found from April to May 2023. Web links are in dark green and ‘clickable’, launching in your Web browser.

‡ On YouTube, a [“Christopher Tolkien interview compilation 2022”](#) (September 2022). This is over an hour of segments otherwise stuck in other videos. Also includes some clips of Priscilla Tolkien remembering her father, and one section in French with hard-coded subtitles.

‡ [Doxacon](#) (May 2023) has its presentations from the conference on “Orthodox Faith and Fandom” online, in streaming audio. No downloads, although *UBlock Origin* | ‘Inspect’ link | open the DIV will find the code with the .MP3 link you need. Tolkien items include...

- [Tolkien Panel](#) (discussion panel)
- [“Biblical Typology in *The Lord of the Rings*”](#)
- [“Spiritual Portraits from the Tolkien Legendarium”](#)
- [“J.R.R. Tolkien and Flannery O’Connor on Christians”](#)
- [“Middle-earth, Writing About the Real, and the Theology of Community”](#)

‡ In French from 2020, a [Radio France audio tour with Vincent Ferre](#), curator of the Tolkien exhibition at the BNF [French national museum], and astrophysicist Roland Lehoucq, among other contributors, on “Tolkien and the sciences”. Seems to be a topic-focused tour of the vast Middle-earth exhibition recently staged in Paris?

‡ A [new ebook](#) (short, at 80 pages in paper) from an expert British faerie-folklore blogger. I've been following his blog for some years now. His [No Earthly Sounds: Faery Music, Song & Verse](#) is...

“on their music and song ... to try to provide a comprehensive statement as to why the faeries sing and play instruments — and what exactly those tunes sound like.”

‡ A new online Masters dissertation for Washington University, [“Legends of Light: Crafting middle-grade fantasy in the tradition of Catholic philosophy and medieval visual culture”](#) (2023). “Middle-grade” is an American school-system term that means middle childhood, ages 8-12. It's a Fine Arts dissertation, which implies encouraging things about the supervisor and department which permitted such a project to go forward. Makes reference to Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, among others, for...

“the writing and illustrating of middle-grade literature that mirrors the wonder-inducing experiences of leafing through an illuminated manuscript and stepping into a Gothic cathedral.”

... and the PDF download is nicely designed as if a professional book, which elegantly sets out the themes and approaches.



‡ Over in Germany I see that there's an adult education course in Duisburg on Tolkien's art and calligraphy...

“The Art of Middle-earth — J.R.R. Tolkien as Visual Artist and Calligrapher’ is the title of the last Jour Fixe in the spring semester of 2023. Axel Voss leads the program.”

Yes, I can see that Tolkien and calligraphy would be a good and natural choice for an adult education evening-course. And easy to market and get local press / radio / blog coverage for.

‡ The *Amon Sul* podcast has [a new long interview with Tom Hillman](#) about his forthcoming book *Pity, Power, and Tolkien's Ring: To Rule the Fate of Many*. Start at 39:00 if you just want the section on pity.

‡ I see Amazon UK has a Kindle ebook edition of *Perilous Realms: Celtic and Norse in Tolkien's Middle-earth* (2005), dated 25th January 2023. I assume this £28 ebook version is new. In a review Fimi described the book as not quite fitting the publisher's over-broad title. Focused on *The Lord of the Rings* it is...

“rather a study of Tolkien's characters, focusing on how Norse and Celtic material influenced the process of their creation and development [...] not so much on motifs and storylines that Tolkien used from his Norse and Celtic sources. [...] thought-provoking and well researched [...] written in a simple but elegant style” and thus somewhat accessible to non-specialists.

The third and fourth chapters especially so, being on travel and landscape features encountered in *LoTR* (“Bridges, Gates, and Doors”, and “Iceland and Middle-earth”).

‡ There's a fledgling "[Tolkien Fanworks Scholarship Bibliography](#)" online (last updated July 2022).

‡ A new open-access article by the technologies librarian at Marquette University, "[Anduin: Transforming manuscripts from *The Lord of the Rings* into a digital experience](#)" (2023).

‡ New at the Bodleian Library, a technical article on "[Preparing J.R.R. Tolkien's drawings for display](#)". No pictures of the pictures, but lots of lovely paper hinges.

‡ Leading Tolkien scholar Michael DROUT has revealed that... "W.W. Norton will be publishing *The Tower and the Ruin*, my book on J.R.R. Tolkien, in spring 2024". The title presumably relates to Tolkien's parable of the tower, given in his *The Monsters and the Critics*.

‡ Publisher Taylor & Francis has [released a date and table of contents](#) for the forthcoming book *J.R.R. Tolkien in Central Europe: Context, Directions, and the Legacy*. The planned publication date is set for 29th September 2023, and the chapters cover receptions of Tolkien translations in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and perhaps more — though other nations and peoples are not stated in the blurb or TOCs.

‡ Details of what sounds like [an event on Tolkien and translation](#), in Italy on 27th May 2023... "The event, organised to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the death of J.R.R. Tolkien, is part of a series of May events to discuss the author of *The Lord of the Rings*". I also see in a press release that the forthcoming Turin Book Fair has a talk about "a national campaign" happening in Italian schools, to do with the same 50th anniversary.

‡ The German fan magazine *Flammifer von Westernis* #68 (April 2023) has been published. My translation of the TOCs suggests that among other items it has an interview with Brian Sibley, an article on Tolkien and Switzerland, and a review of the book *The Science of Middle-earth*.

‡ And finally, in the latest *Journal of Scottish Thought*, “The Angel Creatures of George MacDonald’s *Phantastes*”. This issue is a special on MacDonald and also has an article on “The Literary and Theological Otherworlds in MacDonald’s Fairy Tales”.

‡ Following the recent conference-panel at Niagara Falls (see *Tolkien Gleanings* #20), there’s now a call-for-papers for a subsequent edited book. “The Function of Relics and Ruins in Middle-earth” is the topic, and the deadline for abstracts is 1st July 2023.

‡ Only available as an abstract, but an interesting one, “Who are the True Heroes of J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth Mythology?” (2023)...

“... concludes that each race in Middle-earth has its own representative heroes with each of these characters’ heroic potential and requirements determined not only by their race, but by their individual family history [“familial curses” or an “innate fallen nature” are both suggested]. This perspective is vital to understanding these texts and Tolkien’s intended message correctly.”

I’d add that being orphaned, or half-orphaned, is also a factor to consider. Consider the casually-told familial back-story for Sam, which in dribs and drabs serves to explain his humility and burnish his eventual determined heroism. The reader learns (by implication) that Sam was raised

with no mother, while it's made clear at several points that Sam's gaffer was always ready with a disparaging word or three for his son. Faramir likewise has lost his mother, and has a disparaging father. Even Smeagol, reading between the lines, was raised by his grandmother. Yet so far as I recall there's never been a study of orphan-age and its uses in *LoTR*, with outside reference to the rich historical/literary context of orphans and orphan-age in England from c. 1900s-1950s.

Taking a quick glance at the academic materials I see that the academic survey-book *The Orphan in Fiction and Comics since the 19th Century* (2018) has nothing to say about Tolkien. Nor does the dissertation "A Character Analysis of the Orphan Figure in Children's Literature" (2016). But there obviously is something to say. There may be a dissertation for someone in that.

‡ Among the authors whose works enter the public domain in January 2024, under the 70 year rule, is T.F. Powys. He was one of the Powys brothers, and wrote many Christian fantasy stories and novels, these often having a rather hobbity back-of-beyond setting. Drout's *Tolkien Encyclopaedia* puts it in a more polished way, he... "created isolated and distinct localities emphasising a primitivist vision of the rural Englander." He was well regarded in the pre-war years, and his tales still seem accessible today.

But T.F. Powys is now very obscure today, even to Christians. Perhaps it's the time to prepare a well-edited "best tales of" volume, with an introduction which enquires into the possibility that Tolkien might have read some of his tales?

‡ Now online, the YouTube recording from the recent UK event “Celebrating 70 years since J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Sir Gawain* lecture in Glasgow (1953-2023)”. The first of the three talks starts at 20:00 minutes in, if you want to save some time.

‡ I see that Cambridge University Press published two new books, just before Christmas 2022. One offers chapters which survey various modern epics, *Epic Ambitions in Modern Times* and this has a chapter on Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and *Silmarillion*. The other book is *Cultural Legacies of Old Norse Literature*, though snippets suggest only one chapter (by Geeraert) *might* perhaps have something to say about Tolkien. Both books are paywalled, though both have Kindle ebooks that are far cheaper than otherwise.

‡ Now available, the first issue of the new open-access journal *The Incredible Nineteenth Century: Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Fairy Tale*. Two articles, plus many book reviews. No Tolkien, as yet.

‡ A new Masters dissertation in Philosophy, *Lord of the Meaning: An Examination of Interpretive Theories* (2023), which revolves around the idea of allegory-hunting in *The Lord of the Rings*. Freely online at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada.

‡ A new Masters dissertation for Belmont University, “Tolkien’s Legendarium: An Answer to the Eternal Question of Why Warfighters Engage in Armed Conflict” (2023). The author... “examines how Tolkien drew upon Northern Courage, *Ofermod*, *Comitatus*, and *Præll* to illustrate armed conflict in his Legendarium”.

‡ The next issue of the *Journal of Tolkien Research* has begun posting articles. [Vol. 16, Issue 1](#) opens with thoughts on how “The Wanderer” might have drawn on both Gothic and Classical influences. Specifically, a warrior-culture’s desire for... “a Germanic equivalent of Alexander the Great”.

‡ New to me (thanks to a new listing on da.font) are the [Middle-earth Fonts by Nancy Lorenz](#). These have freely-given permission for commercial use. “Marigold Wild” has some especially nice capital letters, not well previewed on the mixed demo below.



The map can be tallied with [a 1926 air photo](#) and Tolkien's painting of the still un-located "The Cottage".



If one were to get the very high-res version of this and several related views (feel free, I can't afford it and 'Britain from Above' is a pain to buy from) then one could fully tally it against the roof shape and the distinctive windows and end-row location. Most of the other houses in the village look like they have roofs and windows unlike those seen in Tolkien's painting. Thus it seems to me that the identification of the mystery "cottage" would be a process of elimination, also to be usefully guided by Anton's map.

More on Barnt Green later in this issue of *Tolkien Gleanings*, in the "Gallery" section.

‡ A lucky someone managed to bag a picture-map by Bernard Sleigh (famous for [“An Anciente Mappe of Fairyland”](#)), [for a mere £20](#). The map shows the Lickey hills in 1920. As you’ll recall, the Lickeys were a key place in Tolkien’s early boyhood. Being the site of what later became ‘Fern Cottage’, and a site of his early courtship... “Near the end of autumn term 1909 Ronald and Edith ride their bicycles to the Lickey Hills on an afternoon excursion.” (*Chronology*). Tolkien also returned there at other times in his boyhood, on excursions or via visits to the Birmingham Oratory’s ‘Retreat’ house with Father Francis. He also often stayed with his Incedon relatives at nearby Barnt Green, near the southern foot of the Lickeys, and... “in July 1913, he made several paintings and drawings, including King’s Norton from Bilberry Hill [a key hill on the Lickeys]” (*Reader’s Guide*).

Regrettably Sleigh’s home city has never given him an exhibition, or even placed any scans of his maps online. But an example of his penmanship can be seen [here on his Sutton Park map](#). I should add that, so far as I know, the young Tolkien did not know north Birmingham or the then -adjacent Sutton. If one is raised in Birmingham there is often not a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing between north and south, other than perhaps a one-off day-trip around the No. 11’s Outer Circle.

Incidentally, I wonder if some of Sleigh’s maps (made circa 1920-37) might have influenced Tolkien’s own cartography? Sleigh was also a contemporary fairy poet and writer of fairy-tales, and was born and raised in Kings Norton — just a little south of Tolkien’s places and some 20 years before Tolkien’s time there.

‡ Advanced Swedish school “students investigated whether the dragon Smaug can fly”. ‘Maybe’ seems to be the answer from their wind-tunnel tests. But only very fast, and very badly. Ah... but did they take account of his intense heat and the consequent thermal up-drafts?

‡ Call for Papers: Creative Philology... “Signum University Press is pleased to announce a call for papers on Philology for an anthology in honour of Professor J.R.R. Tolkien”. Several suggestions lean towards the ‘invented languages’ crowd, but one may offer scope for historians...

“The implicit or explicit role, place, and/or impact of philology and philological awareness in public life and popular culture.”

Note there is no time-frame specified in this suggestion.
Deadline for abstracts: 31st July 2023.

‡ The Elrond’s Library website has been taken offline. It had a large A-Z listing of known Tolkien translations. The *Tolkien Collector’s Guide* is said to be ingesting the “data” from the site, but I’m uncertain if they’ll also take the site’s PDF essay on “Tolkien and Iceland” (in French). In which case, the Web link I give here goes to the Wayback Machine and an archived PDF.

‡ The YouTube channel *Mapster* takes a new eagle’s-eye view of Tolkien’s Incredible Map of Middle-earth (May 2023, 24 minutes). No wobbly hand-held cameras, dim lighting or clunky sound. This is a slick semi-pro production with a Steadicam and slow pans-and-zooms. As such I guess it stands a chance of being taken off YouTube due to copyright, so you may want to download a copy to keep. At 2023 VidGet.com is the best such service.

- ‡ An unusual study of “Subtlety, Understatement and Omission in *The Lord of the Rings*” in the new issue of the journal *English Studies in Africa* (April 2023) (\$ paywall). It seems rather interesting, but is sadly inaccessible due to the paywall.
- ‡ A YouTube recording of a Cambridge talk titled “Tolkien, Barfield, and Neoplatonism: How Metaphysics Moulded Middle-earth” (2020).
- ‡ Joseph Pearce considers “Tolkien & Lewis on the Blessed Virgin Mary” (summer 2022, reprinted here for springtime 2023).
- ‡ New on Archive.org, *Science Fiction And Fantasy Artists Of The Twentieth Century: A Biographical Dictionary* (2009). This is a thoroughly out-of-print but major reference work. The book offers excellent short biographies and bibliographies for 400+ key artists involved with publishers of literary SF and fantasy for adults. Overwhelmingly North American, but with around 70 British artists manning the tail-guns.
- ‡ An online copy of “The Devil’s Coach Horses” (1925), by Tolkien himself. Now freely available on Archive.org and seen in its original context, after their recent mass ingestion of microfilm journals. By contrast, JSTOR would like to charge you \$51 just for this one item. Here Tolkien the aspiring academic has much to say about the words used for cart-horses and the West Midlands dialects in which they were used. Given his extensive use of horses and ponies in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, many may want to brave the dense discussion.

‡ New on Project MUSE, the latest edition of the scholarly journal *Tolkien Studies* Vol. 19, 2022. Expensively paywalled, but the front page of each item is free. Of interest to myself...

— “A Rabble of Uninvited Dwarves”. (Appears to survey the known source of the dwarf names and, since this is the lead essay, the author presumably has new things to say on the matter).

— “Tolkien, the Medieval Robin Hood, and the Matter of the Greenwood” (“Despite the tremendous strides that scholars of Tolkien’s works have made in identifying and discussing the role that the Arthurian legend played in shaping Tolkien’s literary corpus, they have dedicated very little attention to the ways that Robin Hood and the “Matter of the Greenwood” also influenced the author’s works.”).

— “Early Drafts and Carbon Copies: Composing and Editing *Smith of Wootton Major*”. (Now seems less vital for me, as I find it seeks to clarify a scholarly debate over the ordering in Verlyn Flieger’s *critical edition book of Smith of Wootton Major*).

— Also the “Book Notes” and “The Year’s Work in Tolkien Studies 2019” and “Bibliography (in English) for 2020”.

‡ We get a free bit of the new *Tolkien Studies* journal’s “Bibliography” (see above) and this makes me aware of the article “*In Search of Bombadil*”. Which I find to be freely available in the Fall 2020 edition of the online journal *Parabola*. This article takes a ‘spiritual search’ angle, rather than going source-hunting.

‡ New and free in open-access in the MDPI journal *Religions*, “*On the Symbolic Use of Dragons by Jacobus de Voragine and J.R.R. Tolkien*” (2023). Jacobus was the Italian chronicler of the *Legenda aurea* (debatable dates, possibly the earlier years of the 1260s) which preserves “Saint George and the Dragon”.

‡ The open-access transcript and Powerpoint slides for the talk “Developing a Digital Critical Edition of Tolkien Fanzines” (2023), now available.

‡ A new short blog post at *For the Church*, “Even Tolkien Felt Like a Failure”.

‡ In Switzerland, *Herr der Ringe* is billed as a stage / puppets adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* by Theater HORA and Das Helmi Puppentheater. Although a review reveals it’s a promenade production, with the audience walking through various scenes with live actors and puppets. I’d assume a narrator then fills in the audience on the plot, as they move between key scenes? Four performances a week, until 1st June 2023.

‡ Mapping Middle-earth: Tracing Environmental and Political Narratives in the Literary Geographies and Cartographies of J.R.R Tolkien’s Legendarium (2020). A PhD thesis, for the University of Edinburgh here in the UK. Freely available and with the following contents...

Chapter 1: *Hic Sunt Dracones*: Historical Perspectives on Tolkien’s Cartography.

Chapter 2: Force of Nature: Mapping Environmental Concerns.

Chapter 3: Into the Abyss of Time: Geological and Temporal Mapmaking.

Chapter 4: This Land is My Land: Maps, Power Politics, and Imperialism.

‡ The Sound of Middle-earth: Music and Song among Races in J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings (2022). A Masters degree dissertation for Acadia University in remote Nova Scotia, Canada. Freely available online, with a structure which steps through each of the races in turn.

‡ New on Archive.org, free to borrow, *Glee-Wood: Passages from Middle English Literature from the Eleventh Century to the Fifteenth* (1949). A choice selection for a wider public, offered in English translation and with pleasing mid-century American book design.

‡ I've tracked down "At The Tobacconist's" on YouTube. This being the '20th Lesson' of the Linguaphone *English Conversation* (1930), a set of spoken-word audio discs and accompanying booklets for language learners. The digital version of the recording was taken offline by the British Library several years ago, and the Wayback Machine did not capture its streaming audio. A certain Mr. Tolkien also recorded the '30th Lesson' in this set, titled "Wireless" (i.e. early radio broadcasting). Thankfully this has also been saved on YouTube by a different user. Between these two clear recordings, and with the customer voice on the tobacconist's shop trimmed out, there should be enough here for an AI voice-cloning of Tolkien's clearly-enunciating voice. As it was in 1929, when he was in his prime.

‡ On Archive.org, four new scans of the journal *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*. Being the issues for 1926-28, including a review of Tolkien & Gordon's *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* glossary.

‡ Also new, five scans of *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* for 1923-27, with 1927 having a review of Tolkien & Gordon's *Gawain*. Further note 1923's article "The Tradition of Angelic Singing in English Drama", which Tolkien would likely have noticed.

‡ News of a new book, *Myth, Magic, and Power in Tolkien's Middle-earth: Developing a Model for Understanding Power and Leadership*. Set for release in mid July 2023, with a hefty £65 price tag for what is a 120 page book. But it does appear to be a serious study of “the social power dynamics at work” in human leadership actions. With all examples drawn from *The Lord of the Rings*.

‡ An 11th April 2023 call from the organiser of the [Tolkien Studies Area](#) of the enormous Popular Culture Association Conference (27th-30th March 2024, Chicago). Not a call for that Easter 2024 conference, but rather for a possible online event (presumably for Tolkien scholars) [beyond that](#) in the summer...

“I am chairing an Exploratory Committee to gather information for the Board on what we would need to do to run a Virtual Conference during summer 2024. If you are interested in attending such a conference, or working with [us] on the project, please let me know.”

‡ Advance news of [two books set for 2024](#), from the same author. Just the titles and publishers, at present. *Tolkien's House of Being* from Kent State University Press, and *The Herdsman of Light: Tolkien and the Mystical Theology of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* from Darkly Bright Press.

‡ Tolkien's legacy has helped to revive the making of tapestry wall-hangings in central France. The newspaper [Japan Today reports](#) on the “small town of Aubusson in central France” which has “a tapestry-making tradition that stretches back to the 15th century”. In 2017 they “engaged in a collaborative project to create tapestries

based on Tolkien”. This led to “an agreement with Studio Ghibli in 2019 to create five works based on Miyazaki films.” They’ve recently unveiled a giant *Spirited Away* tapestry. On the back of their Tolkien and Miyazaki work they have had a surge of “applicants to the centre’s artisan training program”.



‡ More news from France, which this summer seems to be seeing a lot of Tolkien activity. [‘Journées de Recherche et de Rencontres sur Tolkien’](#) is the name for the *Tolkiendil* ‘research days’ event in France, set for 6th-7th October 2023 in “the Paris region”. The call-for-papers currently has a date of 31st May 2023. No specific focus, but they’re broadly interested in translation and biography. Note that submitted papers can be in English, as well as French.

‡ Also in France, [Tolkien: Voyage au coeur des forges](#), an exhibition seemingly centered around Tolkien and metal? Not guitar-gouging head-banging heavy-metal music, but the hard clinking and clanking metal. The museum seems to be devoted to metal and metal objects.

The summer 2023 exhibition will have “unique and rare pieces collected by a passionate collector”, seemingly augmented by 2D artworks, painted scale models and fun events (a dwarwish treasure hunt, hobbit banquet and rustic crafts market). The museum is in the hills just to the west of the central city of Lyon, and the show opens on 1st July 2023. Might make for an interesting stop-over, if you can afford to take the train to the south of France this summer? And if there aren’t the inevitable French strikes and blockades.

‡ My [JURN arts & humanities search-engine](#) has been tweaked. The Tolkien publication *Mallorn* is auto-generating a Web page for each and every citation given in every article, posting these at [journals.tolkiensociety.org/mallorn/citationstylelanguage/..](http://journals.tolkiensociety.org/mallorn/citationstylelanguage/) These were being indexed and thus are getting into JURN. But this annoying problem has now been fixed at the JURN end.

‡ After all this time doing *Tolkien Gleanings* I’ve only just discovered [The Latest on C.S. Lewis \(RSS Feed\)](#). This is a monthly blog post which sort of does for Lewis what *Gleanings* does for Tolkien, although more slowly. It just goes to show how deeply buried good material can be on the Web, under mountains of piffle and bot generated ‘content’.

‡ *Consulting Philologist* has a new and long blog-post which forms an [“Introduction to Indo-European Linguistics and Culture Textbooks for the Perplexed”](#)...

“What I have tried to do here is point out the best textbooks to start with for absolute beginners, as well as some other useful textbooks, manuals, and reference works”.

‡ Now published, a chunky new book on Tolkien from a traditional Christian perspective, and titled *The Road Goes Ever On and On* (April 2023). Available in paper and in Kindle ebook, which means a free 10% sample can be sent to your e-reader device. More specifically the book appears to emerge from the author's interest in the intersections between Tolkien's old-school religion and his political views, and looks rather promising in this respect. The ebook preview shows clear writing, and exemplary proofreading bought in at quite some cost from mooreattuned.com.

<u>Introduction</u>
<u>Tolkien, Catholicism, and Christian Themes in Middle-earth</u>
<u>Tolkien's Views on Politics</u>
<u>Kingship and Tyranny—Law, Liberty and Power in Middle-earth</u>
<u>The Wonder That Lies Around us—Tolkien, The Free Peoples and Nature</u>
<u>Environmental Exploitation—The Shadow and the Modern World</u>
<u>Democracy of the Dead</u>
<u>Appendix</u>
<u>Appendix: Further up the Road—Tolkien, Allegory, and Escapism</u>
<u>Sources Cited</u>
<u>References</u>
<u>About the Author</u>

The new book is not to be confused with earlier similar titles, such as A.K. Frailey's *The Road Goes Ever On: A Christian Journey Through The Lord of the Rings* (2017).

‡ A new *Tolkien Lore* podcast examines a little-considered but important matter, “The Main Character of *The Lord of the Rings* Is... Middle-earth”. In 23 minutes (start at 4:20 if you’re short of time) the listener enjoys a cogent and well-delivered survey. I can add a little historical context. Tolkien would have been aware of English folk-anthropomorphism (i.e. the ‘body-scape’) of hills, such as that hinted at in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Where memorably, on the icy track toward Wetton, “Each hill had a hat” of cold mist. My recent book on *Gawain* and Staffordshire newly discovered a folk-use from the very same district... “[in] the phraseology of the place, the ‘mountain had its cap on.’” — this being published prior to the first publication of *Sir Gawain*.

‡ A listing for an evening billed as a conference on Tolkien and the Sciences, to be held at Terra Botanica in the university city of Angers in north-west France, with free tickets...

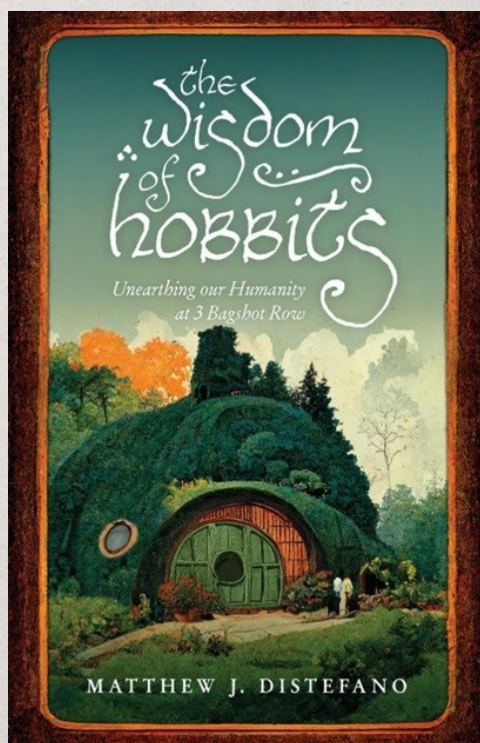
On 12th May 2013, Terra Botanica welcomes renowned paleontologist Jean-Sebastien Steyer, co-editor of the book *Tolkien et les Sciences* (‘Tolkien and the Sciences’, 2019).

The listing alerts me to this relatively recent 400-page book in French. It offers edited contributions from 38 experts in various fields of science, and also from economics and psychoanalysis.

‡ A new John Garth post “Making an ass of yourself, with Geoffrey Bache Smith”, on Geoffrey Bache Smith’s sense of humour. Also a presentation slide from Garth

that did not make it onto the [YouTube recordings of the March 2023 conference](#) on Smith and Tolkien.

‡ [The Wisdom of Hobbits: an online conference](#), 29th April 2023. This \$20 event listing brings news of a new book... “In this three-hour, fully-online event, *Lord of the Rings* scholars join author Matthew J. Distefano to explore themes in the newly published book *The Wisdom of Hobbits*.” The full title is *The Wisdom of Hobbits: Unearthing Our Humanity at 3 Bagshot Row* (March 2023), available in print or as an ebook. There’s also a good in-depth [podcast audio review](#) at *Tolkien Lore*.



[Foreword by Michael Machuga](#)

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Author's Note: A Word About the Cover and Subtitle](#)

[Introduction](#)

[PART I: HOBBIT WONDER](#)

[Chapter 1: An Adventure and a Home](#)

[Chapter 2: Extraordinary Hobbits](#)

[Chapter 3: Tillers of the Earth](#)

[PART II: HOBBIT WILL](#)

[Chapter 4: Great Power in Small Packages](#)

[Chapter 5: The Messiness of Heroism](#)

[Chapter 6: Free Will in Light of the Providence of Ilúvatar](#)

[PART III: HOBBIT WISDOM](#)

[Chapter 7: When Returning Home is Not an Option](#)

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[Appendix A: Various Sketches from In and Around the Shire](#)

[Appendix B: Maps: Bag End; Hobbiton & Bywater, the Shire](#)

[Appendix C: A Survey of Various Crops, Flowers, Trees, and Shrubs Located in the Shire](#)

[Appendix D: Prominent Hobbits Throughout History](#)

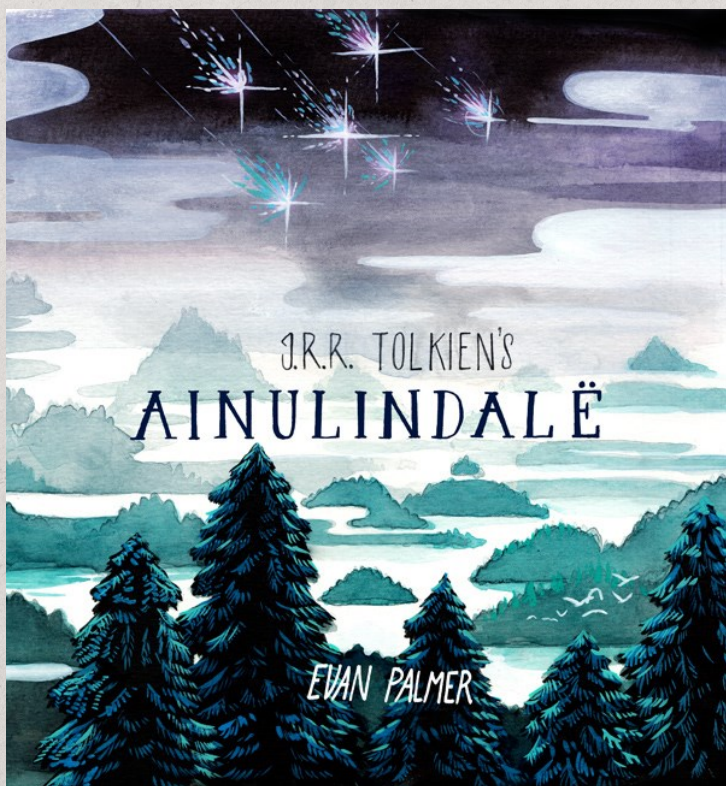
[Bibliography](#)

I have nothing against AI images used properly and tweaked and humanised in Photoshop. But it’s perhaps regrettable that a book on “our humanity” uses an unretouched AI-generated image for the front cover.

‡ From the buzzing world of computer-code scripting languages, a new [Arda Python Library](#) emerges...

“At various times over the last ten months, I’ve been quietly working on a Python library for doing various Tolkien-related calculations. The project is still in its early stages and currently just has two things. Firstly, an initial implementation of **Year** and **YearDelta** classes for dealing with Ages and the beginnings of a Shire Calendar class **ShireDate**. ... Much of the initial motivation for this was wrangling data for Tolkien Timelines.”

‡ Some years ago Evan Palmer released his [Tolkien’s Ainulindale](#) hand-made comic, and I see that he now freely posts the 54 pages as online scans. It’s rather pleasing, and I’d suggest quite suitable for children in middle-childhood. He posts a link to his launch interview, to be found in the back catalogue of the *Talking Tolkien Podcast*.



‡ Thanks to Sebastiano Tassinari for noting that the Renee Vink book of essays *Gleanings from Tolkien's Garden* (2020) does have TOCs online. I had previously been unable to immediately find the book's contents page, though I had found the correct Web link to order the book from Europe. It turns out that the book's contents were detailed in a 2021 review in the *Journal of Inklings Studies* [Vol. 11, No. 2](#).

‡ New in open access, [*Prosody in Medieval English and Norse*](#) (2023). The Oxford University Press book attempts to... "Introduce and explain technical topics and metrical theories for the understanding of readers from a range of backgrounds". Such things are beyond me, but some may be interested... since Tolkien was interested. Click "Open Access", and then the PDF link, to get the book.

‡ [Omentielva Quainea: The International Conference on J.R.R. Tolkien's Invented Languages](#) will be held in France in August 2024. Further details to be announced.

‡ Available now, a new edition of the open scholarly journal *Mythlore*, [Vol. 41, No. 2](#) (Spring/Summer 2023). A half-dozen or so articles are found to be of Tolkien interest, including "Delving Too Greedily: Analyzing Prejudice Against Tolkien's Dwarves as Historical Bias" (asks if his dwarves were really antagonistic to and destructive of nature, as is often casually assumed). Also a short article by Verlyn Flieger in pursuit of a possible trace of wartime code-breaking in Tolkien, and another book-review for *The Gallant Edith Bratt*. Which, I learn, only goes up to war years and not beyond — I've yet to be able to scrape the cash to buy the paperback. There's no ebook.

‡ Book publisher Walking Tree has a large round-up of recent reviews of their books, although Web links are spread across multiple posts. Start at the [31st March](#) post and then move forward (i.e. click on each “Newer items” link), downloading the most interesting PDFs as you go.

‡ Various Tolkien sessions were scheduled for the giant [International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University](#), 11th-13th May 2023. The titles are online...

278 Schneider Hall 1155

Tolkien and the Middle Ages: Tolkien and the Scholastics

Sponsor: D. B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership, Viterbo Univ.
 Presider: Michael A. Wodzak, Viterbo Univ.
 Organizer: Michael A. Wodzak

Thomistic Evil in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*

Mitchell B. Simpson, Univ. of Arkansas–Fayetteville

Tolkien and Aquinas: The Body, Wonder, and Aesthetics

Paul L. Fortunato, Univ. of Houston–Downtown

Was Tolkien a Franciscan? Bonaventurian Themes in the Legendarium

Craig A. Boyd, St. Louis Univ.

“What your folk would call magic”: Thomas Aquinas and Natural Power in Tolkien's Works

Brian McFadden, Texas Tech Univ.

423 Bernhard Center 210

Christopher Tolkien: Medievalist Editor of J. R. R. Tolkien's Legendarium II: The Interactions

Sponsor: Tolkien at Kalamazoo
 Presider: Kristine Larsen, Central Connecticut State Univ.
 Organizer: Yvette Kisor, Ramapo College
 Christopher Vaccaro, Univ. of Vermont

The Legacy of Tolkien's Love for and of Nature in His Children: The Evidence from Michael H. R. Tolkien's Library

Brad Eden, Drexel Univ.

“I have written with you most in mind”: J. R. R. Tolkien's Letters to Christopher Tolkien

Deidre Dawson, Michigan State Univ.

Christopher Tolkien and the Legacy of the Father of Middle-earth

Iona McPeake, New York Univ.

‡ A new one-hour YouTube recording of a lecture on [“Hope Beyond the Walls of the World: J.R.R. Tolkien and Christian Virtue”](#), given this Easter at Bethlehem College and Seminary, Minneapolis, USA. High-quality audio, of a good clear speaker.

‡ [“Tolkien’s Easter Joy in *The Lord of the Rings*...](#)

“Tolkien’s use of the date is not some artificial mechanism by which he links his tale to the Christian myth to come, but a deliberate placement of his tale in history, and not just history, but salvation history”.

‡ The blog *Tolkien: Medieval and Modern* has a new post on the current thinking on the history of ancient [Welsh and English](#)...

“the archaeological community until fairly recently [thought] that the Anglo-Saxon invasions were overblown and that the English had a large amount of Briton in them. But a very recent genetic study of Anglo-Saxon graves (Gretzinger, Sayer, Justeau et al, 2022) proved that they indeed had overwhelmingly Germanic heritage.”

This seems to me to be over-claiming for this new study of ancient DNA. What the new research actually found was that...

“the individuals who we analysed from eastern England [i.e. mostly what were then the fenlands and coastlands] derived up to 76% of their ancestry from the [adjacent] continental North Sea zone, albeit with substantial regional variation and heterogeneity within sites”.

Many were women. Thus it’s open to question if some of these were descendants of women brought from overseas as ‘old country’ brides for the new settlers of eastern England.

‡ An online partial [Film Preview](#) at Archive.org, 15th April 2023. The forthcoming film is *The Forge of Friendship: J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis*. This would appear to be the same as the online Web series filmed and VFX'd in London in early 2023, then called *Fellowship: Tolkien & Lewis*. No visuals, yet.

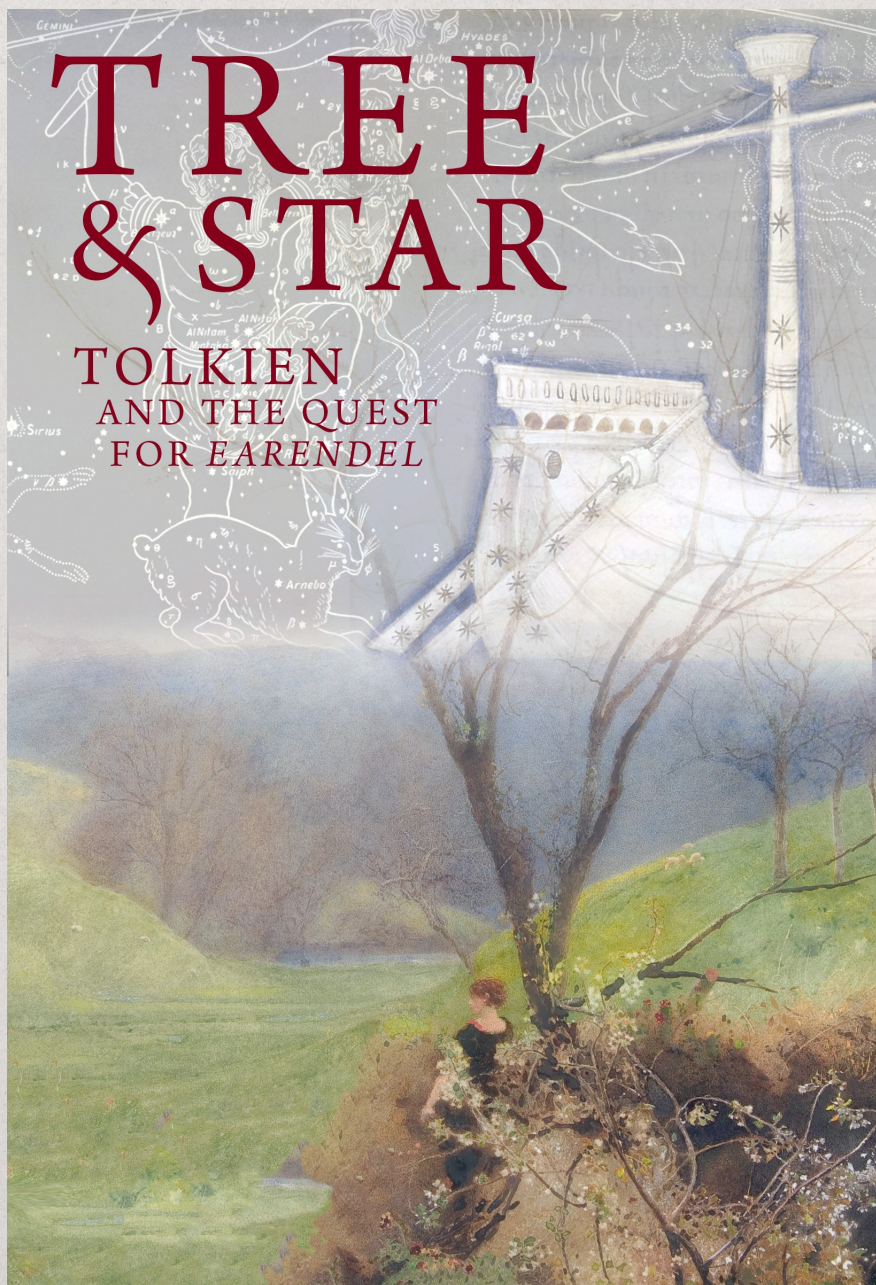
“Hosted by: The Internet Archive and co-sponsored by Northwind Institute and C.S. Lewis Society of California as part of their weekend conference on ‘Tolkien & Lewis in a Digital Age’.”

‡ A new *Journal of Inklings Studies*, [Vol. 13, No. 1](#) (\$ partial paywall). The lead article is relevant to Tolkien, “The Conversions of C.S. Lewis: Notes on Rethinking Their Chronology and Character”. There are also free public reviews including: *The Road to Fair Elfland: Tolkien on Fairy Stories: An Extended Commentary*; *An Anthology of Iberian Scholarship on Tolkien*; and *In the House of Tom Bombadil*.

‡ For sale, [“2 Pieces of Correspondence Concerning the Dating of the 14th C Poem, ‘Sir Gawain and the Green Knight’”](#), with Tolkien’s reply and a useful scan of the armour terms in Gawain placed along a timeline. By that measure “composition” could have been between 1364 and 1410, at least according to the armour specialists of the 1960s (the letter is from 1971). My own well-evidenced date (see my book on *Gawain*) would be the second half of 1377, for the composition.

‡ A public lecture on [“Holidaying in the Middle Ages”](#). Being the J.R.R. Tolkien Professorship of English Literature and Language Inaugural Lecture at Oxford, 6th June 2023.

‡ *Tree & Star: Tolkien and the Quest for Earendel*
(2022), my book of 200,000 words of deep scholarship on the young Tolkien and the mysterious Anglo-Saxon word *earendel*, from which sprang his *Legendarium*. Available now as an ebook, via Gumroad.





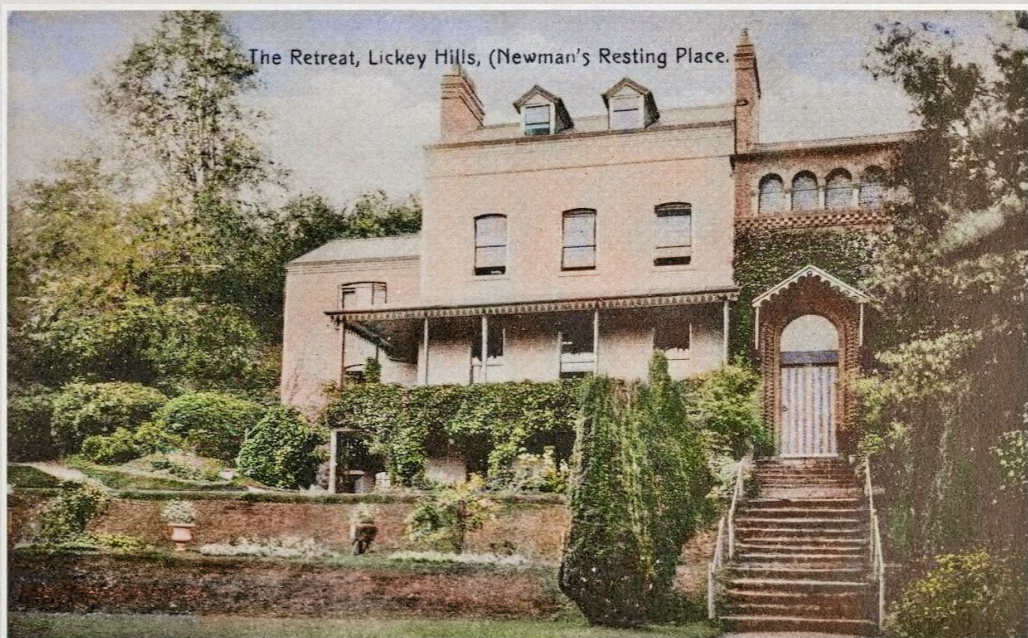
Map by Bernard Sleight, 1920.

Map labels from top, across and down: Eachway; Bridle Path (i.e. for horse riding); Leach Green Lane; Oratory House (aka 'The Retreat' for Birmingham Oratory); grave of Newman; 'Hillside' (house); Hare & Hounds (pub); Fern Cottage; 'The Ancient Game of Golf' (course opened c. 1922); 'This is Rednal Hill'; 'Rednal Village'; Beech Tree Farm; The Great Quarry; Tennis Courts; The Maze; Bowling Green; Dancing Green; Rose & Crown(?) (pub); Bilberry Tea Rooms; Quarry; and Birch Tree Cottage.

The Tolkien family's 'Woodside Cottage' is seen labelled as Fern Cottage. Evidently it was renamed sometime between 1909 and 1920. It should not be confused with 'Hillside' house on the other side of Rednal Hill.



Views of the Oratory 'Retreat' at Rednal. "From the *Short Life* of the Cardinal, by his admiring friend and co-religionist, J.S. Fletcher, we learn that he [Newman] was also a diligent novel reader, and that the library in his country retreat (Rednal), on the slope of the Lickey Hills, contained a choice collection of the best English modern novels." (from *Oxford high Anglicanism*, 1899). One assumes the books were still there when Tolkien was there, and he may even have perused them when visiting.





Church Hill Cottage (1920) by Birmingham artist Elijah Walton. On the right is Rednall Hill, with Tolkien's 'Woodside Cottage' out of sight over the brow. The sandy 'Great Quarry' is on the side facing, recalling the 'Battle Pit' in *LoTR*. Below Walton looks across the gap for a view of Rednall Hill with the Great Quarry gouged in its flank.





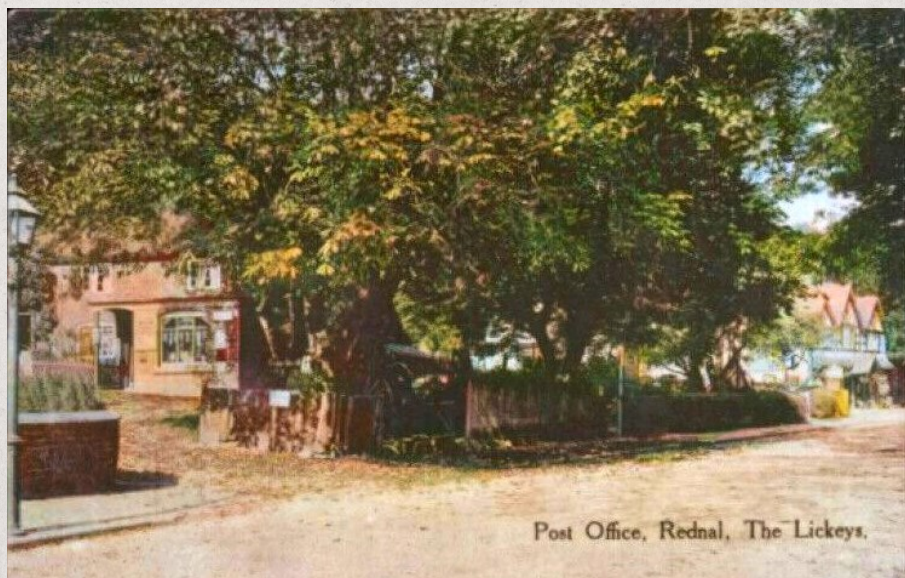
Path up the side of Rednall Hill, by Elijah Walton. On the line between the dense Mirkwood-like pine forest and the lighter stand of lesser pines around 'Hillside'. One can see this path on the 1920 picture-map which opens my Gallery, with the lane at its foot marked as a bridle-path for horses. If one followed this path, at the top, one would see the roof of the Birmingham Oratory's 'Retreat' below.

By 1900 Birmingham's Elijah Walton was 'the Ansel Adams of mountain painting' (the above picture gives no indication of this). One wonders if Tolkien saw a retrospective of his many Middle-earth like mountain paintings?



Collecting branches for a cottage fire, on the side of Rednall Hill, Lickeys. By Birmingham artist Elijah Walton. According to the 1920 picture-map, the curve of the path around the hill would likely place it quite near to 'Woodside Cottage' and the Tolkien family. No doubt the cottage was well-supplied with firewood as the summer cooled, but it might have been tempting for the two boys to gather scented pine wood for the cottage's open fires. The fir-resin would make the branches good fire-starters.

With thanks to Birmingham Museums Trust and the ArtVee website for these high-res CCo pictures by Walton.



The Tolkiens were staying with the postman and his wife, at 'Woodside Cottage'.

Rednal sub-Post Office was only a stone's throw from the start of the oratory driveway (marked here with a dash of yellow). The lads had perfect weather in summer 1904 and went sketching, tree climbing, kite-flying and bilberry-picking.



From Rednal Hill, looking south at dusk toward Bilberry Hill. By Walton.

The *Chronology* adds that when school began in September 1904, J.R.R.... “has to rise early and walk over a mile from Rednal to the nearest station to catch a train into Birmingham; by the time he comes home at the end of the day it is growing dark, and Hilary sometimes meets him with a lamp.” Before the 1920s and the tram terminus, the “nearest station” would be Barnt Green. His walk might sometimes have been over the Lickey hills and woods — though more likely was along the more level lanes.



Barnt Green, just beyond the far south-eastern end of the Lickeys and home to the much-visited Marjorie and Mary Incledon. The railway station entrance-lane is on the left. A later photo shows two stores, one the Post Office. Until the early 1920s this Barnt Green railway station was the only rail entrance to the Lickeys from the nearby city of Birmingham.





An article on transport to the Lickeys in the March 1921 *Town Planning Review* reveals there was not yet a tram line or the later elegant tram terminus. Thus in the 1900s and 1910s the young Tolkien would have reached the Lickeys by bicycle (free) or the Rednal motor-bus (paid, bumpy and noisy... but with an open-topped view on a fine day with your hat tied on — as seen above), or Barnt Green via the railway station.



Barnt Green railway station, with its split track and long bridge spanning multiple platforms. The young Tolkien would have been very familiar with this large and often 'bustling with day-trippers' rural station.



On Bilberry Hill, Lickeys and looking east. Early autumnal rain-clouds loom... but sunlight is still on the Shire-like land, spires and waters below. By Elijah Walton.

FIRE AND LIGHTS

TOLKIEN'S WARTIME FIREWORKS

"Gandalf had made a special study of bewitchments with fire and lights" — *The Hobbit*.

A new free audiobook on LibriVox, titled *[Pyrotechnics: The History and Art of Firework Making \(1922\)](#)* includes "Military Pyrotechny in the Great War", written only a few years after the war ended. The final third of this discusses signalling and illumination star-shells fired from Very 'flare' pistols, and larger rifle-fired star-shells.

I see that enemy capabilities in this field were also vividly noted by Cyril Fall (*The First World War*, 1960)...

"A German attack meeting stout resistance was often a remarkable cooperation between infantry and artillery by [signalling] fireworks far more detailed than the British or French could achieve. The sky was at times so full of yellow, red, and green rockets that the observer wondered how anyone could make head or tail of the signals. Yet time after time the artillery would lengthen or shorten its fire or carry out a re-bombardment of varying

duration. This may be Greek [i.e. incomprehensible] to the infantryman of the Second World War because, having other means of communicating with the artillery, he finds it hard to realise how vital rocket signals might be."

As an experienced wartime signals officer, J.R.R. Tolkien would have had a basic familiarity with ground-candles, coloured smokes, aerial flares and the ubiquitous star-shells — a U.S. report noted that the British used 10 million of these *every month* during the First World War.

Presumably he also had some understanding of larger signalling fireworks, and possibly even experience of maroons. The latter being British firework rockets, usually used as maritime distress rockets at sea and designed to go off with a very loud 'bang' noise. These were in use in London and at least one industrial town, during the latter part of the First World War. They served as advance night-time air-raid warnings /



British star-shell pistol, 1917.

calls for scattered fire-crews. By the time Tolkien was doing his fire-watching duty during the Second World War, these public warnings had been replaced by the now-familiar sound of the air raid sirens. Yet back in 1917-18 the sound was presumably akin to the “deafening ... signal for supper” dragon-rocket, encountered early in *The Lord of the Rings*. One imagines there would also be a dazzling flash if one happened to be looking at the night sky when one went off, akin to the flash that dazzles all the hobbits on the vanishment of Bilbo at the same event.

Which makes one wonder if Tolkien’s evident interest in fire and fireworks might have some origins among such wartime

experiences, although today we might think of ‘signals’ in terms of wireless and codes. I’m however uncertain if maroons were also used for the frequent air-raids that crossed the east coast of England, where Tolkien was [helping to counter airship raids](#) later in the war. Possibly not on the sleepy coast, where a policeman or postmaster with a bicycle and a loud voice (then the more usual British method) would have sufficed for the few civilians. Perhaps further inland, in the industrial towns? But the only hard evidence I can find for the municipal civilian use of air-raid maroons outside London is from the textile town of Macclesfield in Cheshire (see the book *Reporting the Great War*, page 29).

The first use in London of maroons was not until a large airship bombing raid of July 1917, the authorities being previously worried that their abrupt use in a vast city would trigger panics and stampedes (especially dangerous at night in the blackout) for the bomb shelters. This was a real risk, as newspaper reports attest.

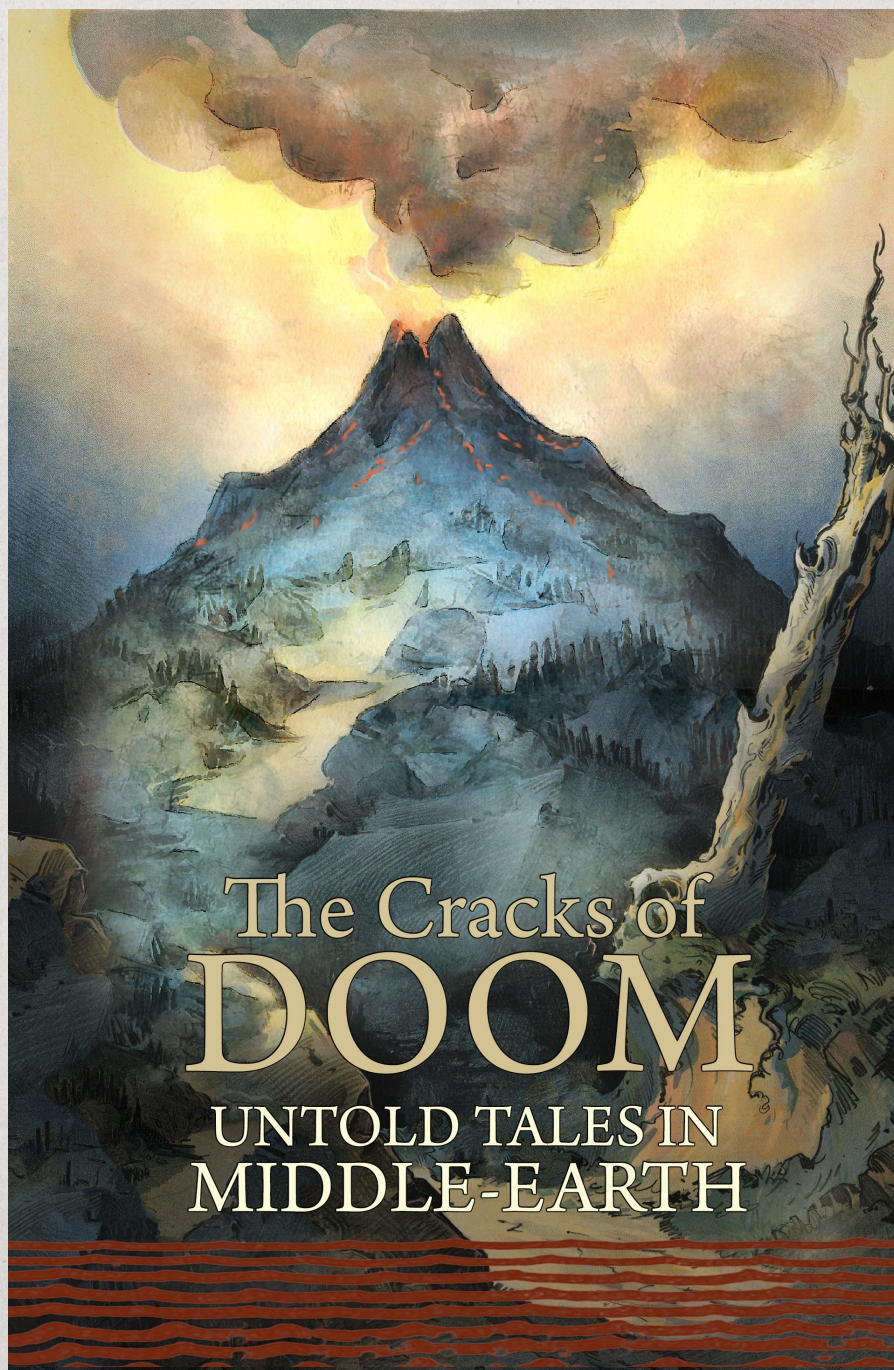
But the public fear had lessened by then, since new incendiary bullets and darts had been invented and with the aid of valiant lone pilots were now destroying what had once seemed to be untouchable ‘monster’ airships. One is reminded here of the special bow of Lorien in *The Lord of the Rings*, which is used by Legolas to bring down the flying Nazgul on the Great River.

My searches suggest that the history of signalling fireworks and star-shells and maroons in the First World War remains to be written. But there is now at least a book-length biography of the ‘wizard’ behind the many weird and yet very workable British military fireworks and related improvised explosives, titled *Gunpowder and Glory: The Explosive Life of*

Frank Brock OBE (2020). It looks like this book would make an accessible starting point for a future researcher on the topic. For the benefit of such a person I should also note that also encountered (but couldn’t get) a 1924 article of unknown title in the *Journal of the Royal Engineers*, and the rocket-scientist and science-fiction writer Willy Ley’s *Shooters and Shooting* (1942) which appears to have a section on star-shells.

All this goes beyond the party fireworks and has an obvious relation to Tolkien’s uses of stars of various colours in *LoTR*. Perhaps even to the enormous evil-cleansing ‘fireworks display’ from Mount Doom at the end of the book. It also seems to relate to at least one ‘communicative’ constellations in the wider legendarium. For instance, The Plough hangs in the night-sky as an enduring war-threat and warning to Melkor. Perhaps in all this we glimpse another nod to the idea of ‘message’ / ‘messenger’ in the Old English word *earendel* — if understood as the morning-star and a bright herald of the coming dawn.





The Cracks of Doom: Untold Tales in Middle-earth (2019). A book of 28,000 words which identifies and details the 'Untold Tales' in Middle-earth, pointing out the 'cracks' where new fan-fiction might be developed. There is also an expanded ebook version. A third edition, now available in 2023, also covers *The Hobbit*.

BOOK REVIEW:

TANGLING WITH TOLKIEN

Michael W. Perry, *Untangling Tolkien: A Chronology and Commentary for The Lord of the Rings*. Inkling Books, Seattle, 2006 revised edition.

The revised edition fixed a number of typing and name errors, but seemingly did not expand the book.

This is flawed but vital reference book for the writer who delves into the day to day flow of *The Lord of the Rings*. Or who just wishes to know the exact date on which one should stew a brace of coneys in memory of Samwise. The buyer unpacks a big floppy paperback of 252 pages, in something like a size of 10" x 12". The book needs to be this shape due to its internal layout. On each page the reader has the day and date given in the Shire Reckoning, what happened in Middle-earth on that day and where, some commentary, and small side-notes rather than the more usual scholarly footnotes.

The thoughtful page layout makes the book very easy for the scholar to pick up and use. One might also wish that such thought had gone into the very lacklustre and off-putting front cover, but that's a relatively minor aesthetic quibble.

The Lords of the Rings is Perry's focus here, with some *Hobbit*. This is not a book of dates for the *Silmarillion* crowd or a philological tree of language development for the linguists. Thus the pre-*LoTR* coverage is patchy. For instance we hear nothing of the battles with the Witch-king in the North Kingdom, but we do otherwise have a reasonable selection of events leading up to Gandalf's fateful meeting with Thorin in April 1341.

I've used the book extensively over the years, and have found no factual errors, and only a couple of remaining typos. The binding and paper has stood up to my flipping and fumbling.

What then, are the flaws? These come in the interruption of the description of events and characters. The reader is happily reading about events in Middle-earth, and immersed in the world when... WHAM!... along comes a comparison to the invasion of Normandy, or Hitler or Stalin. Perry can't resist drawing comparisons, often with the Second World War, and he does so time and time again. This becomes annoying very quickly. It's also difficult to avoid. The reader soon wishes that all of this out-of-world commentary and speculation were swept away into a large section at the back, or still better into another book entirely.

But there is a great deal here that is continually useful. Not least the small and easily digested diagrams of movements for the Nine and key characters, along with some basic family trees. At the back there is a one-page table of important dates for each key character. Much attention is paid to the phases of the moon and the various systems of Middle-earth dating and day/month naming.

The book has no index and there is no ebook edition which would enable keyword search and comparison of multiple results. Due to its format it is unlikely to become available as an ebook.

I see that at mid 2023 it has kept its price at around £20. Is it worth the price? Oh yes, if you are someone writing about *The Lord of the Rings*, Perry's work will save you much time and prevent many niggling errors. The book will be most useful to scholars and academic writers, devisers of fan fiction, and forum gurus checking their facts. Perhaps not so much to map-makers, as several books have already covered that very well. It is not really a book for 'reading through', and the general reader wanting an entertaining long-form read may come away rather disgruntled.

Finally, it's my understanding that this was the book which helped to more firmly establish 'fair use' of Middle-earth by writers, in the face of the Estate's challenges to the book in the early 2000s. The author is thus to be doubly-congratulated on his achievement.



ENGLISH SUMMARY:

TOLKIEN AND WILLIAM MORRIS

“Традиция У. Морриса: в эпическом фэнтези Дж.Р.Р. Толкина”, by Zhamal Zh. Maratova and Tatiana V. Nazarova. This article appeared in the 2020 edition of the *RUDN Journal of Studies in Literature and Journalism*.

The authors find there is at present only fragmentary research on Morris's influence on the formation of Middle-earth, partly because Morris is little read or studied today. A recent thesis by Massey (2007) suggests that Tolkien first encountered Morris's work as a schoolboy, through his translation of the *Volsunga Saga*, as well as through a condensation of the Morris version of the story of *Sigurd* found in Lang's *Red Book of Tales*. In such works he would have encountered a style full of archaisms and poetic inversions, which helped to build detailed imaginary worlds which nevertheless drew sensitively on early English, Norse and Germanic texts. Morris also offered Tolkien an exemplar of a fantasy writer deploying believable peoples to do mighty deeds at clearly described geographical places, set in colorful and weather-swept landscapes.

Various place and other names were perhaps borrowed by Tolkien from Morris, though the two authors often draw on the same archaic sources and texts.

The fact that Morris and Burne-Jones studied at Exeter College may have influenced Tolkien in unknown ways, during his own time as a student there. Like Tolkien, Morris had a distaste for the early industrial world and the systematised 'machine age' thinking then emerging from it, and such ideas were widely discussed at the time. We can at least be sure of a literary influence since, on winning the Skeat Prize in 1914, Tolkien used the prize money to purchase William Morris's *The Life and Death of Jason*, *The Tale of the House of the Wolfings*, and a translation of the *Volsunga Saga*.

Tolkien's attempts at a translated version of the Finnish *Kalevala* at around this time were inspired by Morris's example (as a letter to Edith Bratt clearly shows).

Tolkien likely read Morris's *Earthly Paradise* during his war years, and we know that in the early part of

the First World War fantasy reading was quite popular among soldiers and officers at ‘the front’. Partly this arose out of then rather widespread romantic view of the 14th century as a pinnacle of orderly and courteous civilisation. For some romantic socialists such as Morris, this came to be seen as an almost Arcadian ‘heaven on earth’ that might yet form a template for a future society.

Carpenter suggests *Earthly Paradise* — a long poem of Norsemen who go in search of the land of the immortals but find a last ‘lost’ colony of ancient Greeks — could have influenced Tolkien’s *Book of Forgotten Tales*.

Much later Tolkien mentioned Morris’s *Roots of the Mountain* as a possible inspiration for the reeking landscape of the Dead Marshes in *LoTR*. Tolkien’s Rohirrim and the structure and nature of their land of ‘The Mark’ also owe something to *House of the Wolfings* and *Roots of the Mountains*, and small details such as “the red arrow” recur as a call-to-aid in a last battle against a technically advanced enemy.

In *Roots* there is also a belief in magic, though it is outside the scope of the narrative. Morris later uses magic as something native, but Tolkien confines it mostly to a special Order of wise servants wielding a secret and divine flame.

Around this form of ‘confined magic’ Tolkien sets a flickering nimbus of Catholic belief, often barely to be seen by most readers — yet present. Morris, although a fellow anti-modern, was by contrast a romantic socialist and later an athiest (of the quietist type), and had a more overt political framing.

I would add that the thesis referred to is Massey’s *The Roots of Middle-Earth: William Morris’s Influence upon J.R.R. Tolkien* (2007). I here add a summary for the reader, of some points not yet made. Massey adds that, like *LoTR*, *Roots* also features female warriors and non-coercive deliberative councils. Morris inserts verse into his narrative. Tolkien may have used Morris’s *Beowulf* at school in Birmingham, and the school’s Literary Society certainly discussed and debated Morris. Tolkien almost certainly knew Morris’s *The Well at the World’s End* (1896), perhaps his most popular work, and Christopher Tolkien much later recalled his father having a complete set of Morris’s fiction. Tolkien’s good friend C.S. Lewis was strongly influenced by Morris. Tolkien was professionally involved with at least three female students writing theses on Morris — despite interest in Morris having plunged to an “all-time low” after 1919 and the advent of early modernism. Like Morris, Tolkien has a clear and abiding interest in crafts and hand-work, plants and gardening, and in traditional music and singing.

‘ELROND’S LIBRARY’

VITAL ITEMS FOR BIBLIOPHILIACS

To 2000: The bibliographic “Scholarly Studies of J.R.R. Tolkien and His Works (in English): 1984–2000”. Currently free to download in PDF.

Ongoing: The journal *Tolkien Studies* (\$ paywall) has an annual survey of “The Years Work” and also a “Bibliography” listing of all items known for that year. The journal’s run began in 2004, but the first issue’s “Bibliography” is for 2001-02.

Journals: The various major journals (e.g. *Mallorn*, *Mythlore*, the *Journal of Tolkien Research*, etc) often have their own bibliographic indexes for their articles and book reviews, usually freely offered as single PDF files. These can be downloaded and added to your local search’s index folder. Also save tables-of-contents pages from later issues, as local PDFs in your local search folder. But even discovering what’s in the latest society journals *Amon Hen* or the *BFS Journal* often seems impossible, without paying.

Ongoing and timely: My own *Tolkien Gleanings* (free) keeps track of many things, though not all. The PDF magazine version is free on Gumroad. The ongoing *Tolkien Collector’s Guide* online forum is useful but mostly aimed at collectors of books and ephemera by Tolkien.

Online search: Google Scholar (mixes open and paywalled articles); JURN to search across all open arts & humanities journals; and GRAFT to search all university open repositories. The latter two both expect somewhat sophisticated searches (e.g. *Tolkien 2022 “Beorn” Beowulf-movies*). Just trying a general keyword or two won’t give good results.

Useful to have: Drout’s reliable *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia: Scholarship and Critical Assessment*, and all volumes of *The J.R.R. Tolkien Companion and Guide* in the latest 2017 edition, plus any recent PDF supplements available from the website.

A note on the River Anduin and King Anduin of the Lombards

Readers will recall Tolkien's abiding interest in the Lombards. I have found that 'Anduin' — used by Tolkien as the name of the mighty river in *LoTR* — was long the name used to refer by scholars to one of the key Lombard kings, reigning from 526-572 A.D. The spelling of the name can be found in English as early as Procopius, *The History of the Warres of the Emperor Justinian* (1653) through a journal of 1811, in the 1857 in the *Jahrbuch für Deutsche Sprache, Litteratur* ('Yearbook for German Language and Literature'), and the 1928 Harvard 'Loeb' Classics edition of Procopius in his *History of the Wars (Gothic War)*. One imagines that the latter was a book Tolkien perused.

» royaume à son fils Valdale, qui n'était qu'un
 » enfant, et dont le tuteur nommé **Anduin**
 » administra les états. Cette administration le
 » rendit si puissant, qu'il s'empara de la cou-
 » ronne après la mort de son pupile. » Il a

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Flucht ergriffen. Als die Langobarden nun siegreich heimkehrten, lagen sie ihrem Könige **Anduin** sehr an, er möge den Alboin zu seinem Tischgenossen machen. **Anduin** aber entgegnete, er könne das durchaus nicht thun, um die Volksitte nicht zu verletzen. 'Ihr wißt (sprach er), wie bei uns der Brauch besteht, daß der Sohn des Königs nicht eher mit seinem Vater

xxv. 6-8; sends troops to the Lombards, VIII. xxv. 10; receives a message from **Anduin**, VIII. xxv. 15; sends relief to Croton, VIII. xxvi. 1; receives offers of surrender from Tarentum and Acherontia, VIII. xxvi. 4; provides lavishly for the Gothic war, VIII. xxvi. 7; persuades **Anduin** to send allies, VIII. xxvi. 12; receives Idigisal, VIII. xxvii. 2; refuses to surrender him to Anduin, VIII. xxvii. 4, 5; makes peace with the Gepaedes,

Today he is known to modern historians as 'King Alboin'. See also the names in Tolkien's 'The Lost Road'.

∫ Colophon ∫

Fonts used: Larken Italic for the cover masthead, Accanthis for cover straplines and interior headings, and Georgia 10pt to 14pt for the body text.

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The magazine is produced with Microsoft Publisher on Windows 7. Printed to PDF from Publisher, thus retaining Web links. Print to: 6" x 9".

Base auto-colorisation for the various pictures by Palette.fm, then finished by hand in Photoshop 2018.

Postcards via eBay and PicClick, rectified, cleaned.

Web links have been extracted from the final PDF and then tested for viability with the Screaming Frog SEO software. Any obviously 404 broken Web links were then fixed.

Ongoing *Tolkien Gleanings* information monitoring via Opera and QuiteRSS, plus active searches on Google Search, Google Scholar, JURN and GRAFT.

